

Are you considering giving the gift of technology this holiday season? Here are some things to consider before making purchases to avoid the holiday let-down . . . or melt-down!

Since the iPad's unveiling, parents and professionals have brought them into countless homes, classrooms and therapy sessions around the world. As we know there are many key components to successful autism intervention, the iPad is simply one door to the future.



Here are some tips to remember when considering your purchase:

- ▶ Focus on Interaction and Communication - Not the Technology!
- ▶ People are the most important component in developing communication skills.
- ▶ Technology is a tool for people.
- ▶ It is easy to get lost in the equipment; and acquiring the equipment is just one small step.
- ▶ Technology and augmentative communication systems are useless in enabling children to realize their potential without appropriate training and a supportive environment.
- ▶ Focus on the process and outcome of learning and interaction . . . not the "BOX"!

While the iPad and apps have much to offer individuals with ASD as well as parents and professionals who work with them, it is important to consider several factors before determining if they are indeed the most appropriate solution for your individual needs.

- ▶ Due to the large number of apps "designed for ASD," it can be difficult to determine if the apps are indeed reliable, appropriate, and suitable for the skill you are targeting.
- ▶ It is often a challenge to discern between apps that are best implemented by a professional or therapist, which apps are best for communication, language and learning, social interaction and engagement, and which are designed just for fun.
- ▶ Consider first an individual's sensory, visual, motor, and specific access needs to ensure optimal use of the apps and devices.

"Appcessories Bonanza"

- ▶ Don't lose the value of this tool simply because it cannot be accessed!
- ▶ There are many cases, mounts, and keyguards that the MD AT Cooperative's iResource Center has available for demonstration and discount purchasing.

A Word to the Wise . . .

- ▶ The goal is to find treatment approaches and methods which will enable each individual to maximize his learning, social, and communication potential.
- ▶ Just because apps are easily accessible does not mean they are indicated or appropriate for every individual's unique abilities and needs.



The iPad isn't the cure to Autism—it is an exciting resource and tool for parents and professionals that can work when implemented appropriately and customized for an individual's specific interests, abilities and needs.

Consult a professional!

Our Assistive Technology Specialist can help guide you through this process so that your experience with this technology is rewarding, enriching, and beneficial. We have numerous apps, adapted accessories, and informational resources available for demonstration and loan at our convenient Columbia location. Private evaluations and consultations also available. Call us at 410.381.2667 or email communications@matcoop.org.